

13 February 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR:

This memorandum is for information only.

1. With reference to your speech before the MIT regional conference in Chicago, it is believed that many members of the audience will have read FORTUNE magazine for February 1957 which contains a symposium of five articles collectively entitled "The Crisis of Communism." These are: "The Condition of Communism" by Emmet Hughes, which deals with the principal problems facing Soviet and other Communist leaders as well as those that they raise for the West; "How Elastic is a Communist" by Daniel Seligman, James Shepley, and Charles J. V. Murphy on the difficulties of individual non-Soviet Communist parties; "The Crisis of Soviet Capitalism" by Gilbert Burck and Sanford S. Parker, which claims that "Stalin converted his country into what is, in the worst (Marxian) sense, one of the most capitalistic states of all time"; "Russia, the Power and the People," a photographic essay; and "How Good is Soviet Science," a detailed exposition of this much-discussed question. This latter article makes mention of studies carried on by the Center of International Studies at MIT and was based in part on an interview with Dr. Scoville, AD/SI.

2. In particular, Mr. Hughes's analysis of the dilemmas inherent in post-Stalinist Russia takes up points also considered in the draft of your speech submitted by Mr. Billington today. Hughes reduces the "riddle of how, without the dictator, the dictatorship could survive" to three "deadly dilemmas" to none of which Moscow has found an answer:

(1) "Can 'collective leadership' within the Soviet Union ever provide effective leadership for world Communism?"

(2) "Can the 'liberalization' of political rule -- either in the satellite nations or in the Soviet Union itself -- be accurately controlled?

(3) "Can a Communist party be allowed freedom to amend belief and improvise policy -- and still remain Communist?"

Hughes enumerates as particular Soviet problems "demanding ominous choices" as follows:

a. "The need to make economic concessions to the satellites has come precisely at the moment when Soviet Russia's own economic machinery is so strained that a cutback in industrialization seems inevitable;

b. "The need to revert in Hungary to the most brutal Stalinist methods of repression, so recently stigmatized, has come precisely at the time when Soviet leaders were striving to display to the world as well as to their own people, if not new morals, at least new manners;

c. "The ferment in the satellites has come exactly when it is most costly in terms of world diplomacy -- when Soviet leaders, looking ahead to more serious negotiation with the West, most urgently sought to show every sign of strength;

d. "The shocking failure of Communist educational methods -- a failure equally clear in Warsaw, Budapest, even some Soviet universities -- has come just when Soviet Communism was already amply burdened with the ideological trials of 'collective leadership;'

e. "The doctrinal confusion and structural weaknesses of Communist parties have developed in a period of 'coexistence' with the West. The Soviet leadership's journey to the Summit at Geneva, its travels to Britain and the Far East, its allowing more Westerners to visit the USSR, its

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lessening of anti-Western violence in the Soviet press -- all these, like all aspects of Soviet world conduct, have immediate domestic meaning. In this case the actions have won certain credit for the regime by somewhat easing the people's fear of World War III. But they also have weakened the sense of external danger so necessary to domestic discipline. At such a time, Communist ideology should be most cohesive, all parties firmly directed."

Mr. Hughes seems to lay emphasis on the supposition that as obvious and attractive as a return to Stalinism may seem in the face of revolt and potential revolt, the present rulers in the Kremlin, having suffered personally from Stalin's methods, shrink from the full implications of such a solution. Maintaining that it might be wise to watch the "outward devices of politics or propaganda" used by the USSR, rather than assume that basic Soviet purposes never change, Hughes makes much of a theory that in the long run the destiny of communism will depend on Western reactions to Communist developments and concludes that, "Thus -- quite literally -- the destiny of world Communism stands to be decided in neither Moscow nor Warsaw nor Belgrade nor Budapest -- but in Washington, D. C."

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